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Studies in the Doctrine OF Non-Violence

11 SEP 1931

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BOOKS OF REFERENCE

Hind Swaraj	M. K. Gandhi.	
Mahatma Gandhi	Romain Rolland	ref. to as R. R
Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas.	C. F. Andrews	ref. to as "Ideas"
Mahatma Gandhi	Gray and Parekh	ref. to as M. G.

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The doctrine of non-violence as stated and expounded by Mahatma Gandhi

INTRODUCTORY

Mahatma Gandhi is the leader of the Indian National Movement intended to secure for India Purna Swaraj. The movement represents a crisis in Indian History. A crisis is a supreme struggle between rival and opposing forces—creating an either or or situation. The alternatives involved in the crisis are subjection or freedom and the forces ranged against each other are forces of domination and freedom. Though the movement is nation—wide creating crises all along the line—political, social, religious, economic and cultural—the tension is greatest in the political region. The question that the Indian nation has put to itself is, How shall we win our freedom?

Thus put the question is neither new to the world or peculiar to India. All through history similar situations have arisen when people under bondage have sought freedom. The Israelites under Pharoah faced the same situation in and through the leadership of Moses. The British asked the question when under Roman rule through their queen Boadicea. In the Great War contending parties were up against the same issue. Russia under the Czar, and Spain under Alfonso had to solve similar problems. Egypt is exercised about it at this moment. What distinguishes Indian Nationalism from other nationalisms is not the fact that it is nationalism but the fact it is Indian. The problem is the same, the goal is the same as with other nations, but the method is our own. To the question how shall we win our liberty numerous answers are available, some borrowed from the history of other nations, and some suggested by the history of India. The Gandhian experiment is revolutionary in

its nature because it has forged a new instrument of realisation in politics. What makes it original is that it applies steadfastly and deliberately spiritual (we would not say religious) ideas and dynamic to the solution of a purely secular problem. The new revolutionary value of the Indian experiment lies in the fact that it reverses the accepted methods of political warfare. In this attempt to win political freedom violence is discarded. Non-violence backed by a spiritual dynamic is adopted. There is still a struggle but there is no fight, there is still determination to win but no hatred. We share with others similarly situated the desire to win freedom. Our attempt to win it by non-violence is our own. The ideas and forces behind non-violence are distinctly spiritual (though not religious.)

The studies herein undertaken are not directly concerned with the political situation. They relate to an enquiry as to the nature and value of the spiritual ideas behind the political movement. It is better to get a first hand statement of the doctrine from the mouth of Gandhiji as expounded by him before the political situation arose.

II

On the occasion of the inauguration of the Sabarmati Ashram, Mahatmaji expounded the spiritual ideas and discipline that are to govern, the personal and social life of the Ashram. They are stated in the form of vows which every member has to take. They are 1. the vow of truth. 2. the vow of ahimsa. 3. the vow of celibacy. 4. the vow of the control of the palate. 5. the vow of non-thieving. 6. the vow of swadsshi. 7. the vow of fearlessness. 8. the vow of khaddar. 9. the vow regarding untouchables. Of these the first two are relevant for our purpose.

"The vow of truth not simply as we understand it—not truth which merely answers the saying 'honesty is the best policy, implying that if it is not the best policy we may depart from it. Here truth as it is conceived means that we may have to rule our life by this law of truth at any cost and in order to

satisfy the definition I have drawn upon the celebrated illustration of the life of Prahalada. For the sake of truth he dared to oppose his own father and he defended himself not by paying his father back in his own coin; rather in defence of truth as he knew it he was prepared to die, without caring to return the blows he has received from the father or from those who were charged with his father's instructions; on the contrary, with a smile on his lips he underwent innumerable tortures to which he was subjected with the result that at last the truth triumphed. In our Ashram we make it a rule to say 'No' when we mean 'No' regardless of consequences."

The doctrine of ahimsa—literally ahimsa means' non-killing, But to me it has a world of meaning and takes me into a realm much higher, infinitely higher. It really means we may not offend anybody; you may not harbour any uncharitable thought, even in connection with one who may consider himself your enemy. To one who follows this doctrine there is no room for an enemy. But there may be people who consider themselves to be his enemies. So it is held that we may not harbour an evil thonght even in connection with such persons. If we return blow for blow we depart from the doctrine of ahimsa. But I go further, if we resent a friend's action or the so-called enemy's action we still fall short of the doctrine. But when I say we should not resent I do not say we should acquiesce. By the word resenting, I mean that some harm should be done to the enemy or that he should be put out of the way, not even by the action of ours but by the action of somebody also or say divine agency. If you harbour even this thought we depart from this doctrine of non-violence. Those who join the ashram have literally to accept this meaning.

"A man who believes in the efficacy of this doctrine finds in the ultimate stage, when he is about to reach the goal, the whole world at his feet. If we express your love—ahimsa—in such a manner that it impresses itself indelibly upon your so called enemy he must return that love; under this rule there is no room for organised assasinations or murders openly committed or for any violence for the sake of your country and even for guarding the honour of previous ones that may be under your charge. After al that would be a poor defence of their honour. This doctrine tells

us that we may guard the honour of those under our charge by delivering our own lives into the hands of the man who would commit the sacrilege. That requires far greater courage than delivering blows. If you do not retaliate but stand your ground between your charge and the opponent simply receiving the blows without retaliating what happens? I give you my promise that the whole of his violence will be expended on you and your friend will be left unscathed. Under this plan of life there is no conception of patriotism which justifies such wars as you witness to-day in Europe.

" Politics divorced from life has no meaning "

The above quotations give us an insight into the spiritual ideas behind the present political struggle as accepted by Gandhiji. There application to politics is hinted at and one obvious and necessary consequence i.e., renunciation of physical force and hatred clearly stated.

NOTES

1. Read if possible the speech of Mahatma Gandhi delivered at the opening of the ashram. Read it carefully and critically. The speech is found in Ch. 5 C.F. Andrews " Ideas"

2. What are your reactions to the principles stated herein as a christian and as an Indian?

3. If you disagree—why? If you agree—why?

4. If these principles are not to govern our life—what other principles should be adopted?

II

General features of the doctrine of Non-Violence

In order fully to bring out the implications of the doctrine it is useful to concentrate attention on certain aspects and distinctions.

1. It is necessary that certain terms frequently employed in the literature of the subject should be clearly understood and their correlation correctly comprehended.

(*a*) Ahimsa—non-violence—is a method, a mood—any way a means to an end.

(*b*) Satyagraha—grasping the truth or satya—is the end, in whose defence or for whose establishment when imperilled satyagraha is employed.

(*c*) Soul force—the moral energy—(apart from religious dynamic which is employed to defend the truth along with ahimsa. Ahimsa connotes the rejection of force as an implement of warfare and soul force indicates the instrument to be used, soul force is a weapon—while ahimsa is a method or the way in which the weapon is employed.

(*d*) Non-resistance or passive resistance—both are incorrect and inadequate nomenclatures—to be eschewed—The doctrine inadequately called doctrine of non-violence—is not merely negative—ceasing from resistance but resistance in a non-violent way-Passive resistance—merely indicates the tension but not warfare, The correct expression is non-violent resistance.

(*e*) Non-co-operation—is the name given to ahimsa when applied to a political end. The withdrawal of co-operation is the moral substitute for active opposition motived by hatred.

(f) Civil Disobedience—is the positive application of the soul force for a political end.

a, b, c relate to the doctrine of non-violence in general, *d, e, f* to the specific application of the doctrine to the political situation.

The correlation of these elements is as follows:

1. Truth is defended by grasping it firmly and employing soul force in its defence, with a resolution never to use it in violence—(either moral or physical) Political truth (i.e. Swaraj) is attained by standing up bravely for liberty and by the use of soulforce bearing punishment or imprisonment meekly without entertaining the desire to hit back or hate the opponent.

2. The doctrine of non-violent resistance has a negative as well as a positive aspect. It cannot adequately be expounded in terms of non-prefixes. Non-violence is not mere non-resistance. It is not refusing to give battle. The battle is there—the struggle is there—but it is not violent. There is no infliction of pain or killing—no hatred. Violence is renounced but not the conflict. There is no fighting but there is the struggle and victory or struggle and defeat. Retaliation moral and physical—is discarded once for all—This is the negative aspect —the ahimsa aspect.

Positively we win not by renouncing physical force but by using moral and soul force. We fight but not with carnal weapons.

The doctrine of non-violent resistance is not 'resist not evil' but resist not evil with evil but 'evil with good'

3. The doctrine is a doctrine of crisis.

Life is not all strife—all fight—life is not always this versus that—this against that. Life is also development—unfoldment, growth.

A crisis is the grappling of opposing forces involving the possibility of victory or defeat. They occur in life but they do not represent its full content. There is peace as well as strife in natural and moral life.

Ahimsa is the ethics of warfare—dharma of the battlefield

It is applied when forces oppose and struggle against each other and not when they move together in harmony. We non-co-operate with the enemy and co-operate with the friend. When the enemy is not or is converted into a friend there is no need for resistance violent or non-violent. Love then comes into play and sustains peace and life. When struggle begins, when truth has to be defended—ahimsa comes in

"The soul of the movement of satyagraha is active resistance —resistance finds outlet not in violence but in active force of love, faith and sacrifice. The threefold energy is expressed in the word satyagraha" R. R. p. 46.

"I cultivate the quiet courage of dying without killing" M. G.

"I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. Non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer but the putting of one's own soul against the will of a tyrant." M. G.

4. Satyagraha is a weapon of ultimate resort—not of ordinary use—Happiness in life depends on co-operation and harmony. There are minor strifes and tensions of life which are amenable to love and reasonable co-operation. In such cases the doctrine is not intended to be applied. Life—civil life will fall to pieces if satyagraha is used by every individual when he differs from others. You can employ it for minor and lesser ends. Such employment would destroy the cohesion of life. That is why we have called it ethics of crisis. It is intended to be used not in all quarrels but in supreme and decisive battles. What is supreme and decisive has to be determined by the best of our nation in any given situation.

5. Satyagraha is not a doctrine of diplomacy but what pertains to human dignity and therefore you cannot surrender it without injuring your soul.

"Non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the beast. The dignity of man requires obedience to a

higher law—to the strength of the spirit. I want India to practise non-violence being conscious of the strength and power. I want India to recognise she has a soul that cannot perish and that can raise above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of the world." R. R. p. 48.

6. The doctrine of non-violence as conceived by Gandhiji is not derived from any single source. We have his own statement that he derived inspiration both from Christianity and Hinduism—from the Gita and the Gospels. The christian elements have come to him through the life of Tolstoi. The Hindu experience has reached him through the young Jain Rajachendra.

Ahimsa—is expounded in Hinduism—and forms the corner stone of Jaina Ethics.

Satyagraha—though an expression coined by Gandhiji is adopted from Jaina Ethics.

The idea of suffering and vicarious suffering is taken from the life of Christ through the teaching of Tolstoi.

The primacy given to the Sermon on the Mount—points also to the same source.

It will help to fill the content of the doctrine to trace the Hindu and Christian contributions.

Question :

Discuss each one of the propositions in the light of the Christian ideal and practical common sense ?

III

The contribution of Hinduism to the doctrine of Non-Violence

Hinduism for the sake of convenience may be taken in this study to include Buddhism and Jainism-although they are regarded as anti-Hindu, heretical creeds. Development of the idea of Ahimsa and Satyagraha in Hinduism.

(*a*) The Vedic religion centred round animal sacrifices to Gods.

(*b*) Against this religion which permitted animal sacrifices there were three revolts led by

BUDDHISM—JAINISM—EARLY THEISM

All these religions set their face against the vedic-religion and particularly condemned animal sacrifice. Originally ahimsa meant, non-killing, non-killing for sacrifice.

(*c*) Buddhism did not object to 'killing' but only killing for sacrifice, although it preached larger humanitarianism which included kindness to animals. But Jainism adopted non-killing in the absolute sense making it the centre of its ethics.

(*d*) In the Upanishads we find a pronounced tendency to spiritualise the sacrificial system. The rishis maintained that the sacrifice advocated in the Vedas is not sacrifice of animals but sacrifice of animal passion. Ahimsa came to mean 'the uprooting of hatred, malice etc. It became a virtue, an attitude towards men and nature in which the desire to hurt or destroy has no place.

(*e*) The doctrine of ahimsa was then taken over into Hinduism. In Mahabarata—the oft—quoted expres-

sion 'ahimsa paramo dharma'—ahimsa is the supreme duty-occurs.

(*f*) In the Bhagavad Gita, the expression occurs in describing the virtues of a Yogi i.e. the man who has realised God.

(*g*) It will thus be seen that the idea developed from non-killing into non-violence and from that into a virtue of benevolence.

(*h*) The idea of ahimsa does not seem to have passed over into a positive conception of love. The strain of love in Hinduism comes from Bhakti religion and remains unassociated with ahimsa. The notion of ahimsa retained a negative quality throughout.

Ahimsa as a dharma of battle, as an instrument of spiritual warfare, as an attitude of social relations, is not found in any pronounced manner in Hinduism. That content is put into the idea of ahimsa by Ghandhiji from christian sources.

Note. Gandhiji holds that the teaching of the Gita is the same as that of the Sermon of the Mount. Lokamanya Tilak and orthodox commentators do not agree with him in this view. They maintain that the Gita avowedly sanctions violence in a righteous cause. They also contend that the doctrine of ahimsa as an active principle in civic life and strife is derived from Christianity.

2. Satyagraha as vindicating truth by non-violence is not in this form to be found as a doctrine of Hinduism. The word was coined by Gandhiji.

The vow of truth—satya vrata—is found in Jainism and the Puranams. In the context they mean adherence to caste dharma.

3. The notion of soul force which can and should be used as a weapon of warfare is also Gandhiji's. The maxim that truth will triumph over all opposition is frequently stated in Hinduism. That truth should be made triumphant by the use of moral force and by renouncing physical force is not a principle grounded in Hinduism. Gandhiji's idea seems to be that our souls can liberate moral energies which alone

should be used in the struggle for life—Even if he does not take the idea from Christianity, he derives his inspiration from that source.

Reference

C. F. Andrews' Ideas, chapter VII page 30
Gray and Parekh-foot notes- p. 39 and 40

NOTES

Discuss how far the doctrine of non-violence may be regarded as the message of the Gita.

Study the precise meaning attached to ahimsa and satya graha-in Jainism and Buddhism.

Refer to 'The Heart of Jainism'—by Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson

IV

The contribution of Christianity to the doctrine of Non-Violence

A. The Ethics of the Sermon on the Mount.

1. Mahatmaji has clearly acknowledged his indebtedness to and inspiration from the Sermon on the Mount in this respect.

> "The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount competes on almost equal terms with the Bhagavad Gita for the domination of my heart" R. R. pp. 95-100.

2. Before applying the doctrine of ahimsa to the Indian situation Mahatma Gandhi applied it in South Africa. The inspiration for the South African Movement was derived from writings of Count Tolstoi, who sought to effect a political revolution in Russia on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount.

3. The Sermon on the Mount deals with the christian ethics of warfare, not with the christian ethics of peace. A christian should live in peace but may be called upon any moment to strive against the powers of the world. Should a conflict arise between the christianity and the world, between a christian and those who would treat him as their enemy, how is he to behave?

The great principle of christian life is Love. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" is the supreme law of Christ. Love (as Christ conceives it) is the cement of society at rest or in peace. But suppose society wages war against the christian? What principle is he to adopt?

Before Christ, the ethics of war was different from the ethics of peace. Love your friend but hate and fight your

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enemy was the pre-christian ethics-such as obtained for example in the Old Testament.

The unique importance of the Sermon on the Mount lies in extending the ethics of peace to warfare. 'Love your neighbour as thyself' is Christianity in action in peace. 'Love your enemy' is Christianity in action in war.

Mat 5; 45 "Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

4. It should be noticed that the whole of the principle so enunciated is not applied in politics. The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount is applied, so far as practicable, to the political situation.

Between 'hate your enemy' which pre-christian ethics adopted and 'love your enemy' advocated by Christ there is a via media suitable to immediate exigencies of the political warfare. The centre point between the poles is found in 'resist not evil' Mat 5:39—further amplified by St. Paul' be not overcome by evil (but.....................) Roman 12:21. 'Recompense to no man evil for evil' Roman 12.17 also I Thes 5:15.

The political doctrine is 'resist not evil with evil, force with force, killing with killing, hate with hate' but resist evil and suffer patiently the necessarv consequences.

We are concerned in the political warfare with freedom and not with opponent's future — our immediate concern is to neutralise oppsition and not to convert the enemy into a friend. We want freedom and we may overcome the opposition by countering force with force or by refusing to meet force with force—even if we do not meet it with love.

The reason for the inapplicability of the law of love in full is that in political warfare opponents are not men but forces, institutions, powers and principalities. The opponent is the political system but not men in their individual capacity. A situation like that calls for the principle 'non-

hatred' rather than love. This is why the doctrine is called the doctrine of non-violence.

5. It has already been pointed out that a doctrine of non-violence under the name of ahimsa found a central place in Jaina ethics and thence passed over into current Hinduism. Starting as a protest against animal sacrifice, it developed into a moral attitude in which strong passions like hatred are eschewed as detrimental to spiritual welfare. The line of development finds its culmination in Mahabarata, where it is treated as an essential element in the social outlook of a man who has realised God. Such a man has no anger or enmity in his heart and never hurts man or animal.• But the doctrine is never regarded in Hinduism as a spiritual weapon of warfare. In Gita, according to the prevailing interpretation of its message, ahimsa is regarded as an inappropriate weapon in the battle. The teachings and the life of our Lord, however illustrate to the world the need and the necessity of using 'non-resistance' in moral warfare. The early Christian Church employed it successfully to a large extent. Count Tolstoi demonstrated its possible efficacy in the modern state. We may therefore take it that the distinctive contribution of Christianity is not so much the idea of 'ahimsa' but the discovery of its application to life.

B. The doctrine of non-violence involves as a necessary adjunct a philosophy of suffering. This philosophy of suffering is another contribution of Christianity to the doctrine of non-violent resistance.

1. Suffering comes into the life of man in many ways:—

(*a*) Non-ethical suffering: suffering that comes to man independent of his conduct *e.g.* suffering from earth-quakes, storms, old age and decay, heredity.

(*b*) 1. Ethical suffering: suffering issuing as the result of conduct i. e., Suffering incurred as the result of transgression of the laws of nature or as punishment for violation of the laws of society:—as the

consequences of sin. The wages of sin is suffering and death.

2. Suffering incurred or endured for the sake of righteousness or in doing good-amidst people who are opposed to it *e.g.* imprisonment, persecution, that martyrs and reformers had to undergo 2 Cor 7 : 10–12.

(*c*) Vicarious suffering: suffering deliberately taken over out of love, to save others from the consequences of their actions-atoning suffering of which the Cross has become the eternal symbol-redemptive suffering.

2. Of these we are not concerned here with a ; *(b)* 1. has be avoided ; b.2 has to be faced without flinching ; c, has to be courted. It is obvious that all fight whether righteous or unrighteous, whether you use force or not involves suffering. The difference is that pre-christian ethics permitted and even advocated suffering and inflicting of suffering for righteousness sake whereas Christianity advocates suffering but not inflicting suffering in a conflict. This principle is fully adopted in the satyagraha movement. The christian origin of this principle is patent. It is also traced to Hinduism and the sufferings of Prahlada are given as an illustration.

With regard to c, vicarious suffering we find two ideas prominent 1. that suffering qua suffering is purifying 2. that the suffering of others can be taken over. It is doubtful whether any of these ideas are essential ingredients of our Lord's teaching. The Sermon on the Mount does not refer to them. It deals only with suffering for righteousness or for Christ's sake. The Greeks entertained the idea that tragedy purifies. The Jewish system of sacrifices and the Roman system of Hostages contained the notion of substituted punishment. The whole doctrine of vicarious atonement arises when we look at the Cross through the medium of Jewish and Greco-Roman conceptions of induced suffering. Whatever its origin this doctrine of vicarious suffering is peculiar to Christianity and Christian experience, Mahatma Gandhi advocates the view that suffering purifies and his constant fasts when his followers

transgress the spirit of satyagraha-indicates his personal faith in atonement.

3. Hinduism—classical Hinduism—states the problem of religion as escape from suffering which is regarded as synonymous with life. It is extremely doubtful whether it makes suffering a part of the solution. Suffering does not enter as an element in its gospel. It has doubtless grasped the idea that suffering comes in the pursuit of satya. The story of Prahlada is indicative of it. But that story stands as an isolated instance in the history of Hinduism. At any rate it is not a prominent Hindu doctrine. The idea of purificatory and vicarious suffering is not also a prominent doctrine in Hinduism, Probably it is not found in the original teaching of Jesus. It is obviously borrowed from the teaching of Christianity if not from Christ. Hindu asceticism contains the notion that self inflicted suffering releases spiritual power. But this idea has nothing to do with the conception of atoning suffering and does not seem to enter into the philosophy of satyagraha.

4. Mahatma Gandhi's view on suffering is stated in the following passage.

> "Suffering is the mark of human tribe. It is an eternal law. The mother suffers that the child may live. Life comes out of death. The condition of wheat growing is that the seed grain should perish. No country has ever arisen without being purified through the fire of suffering. It is impossible to do away with the law of suffering. Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone—the purer is the suffering the greater is the progress: Non-violence in its dynamic condition is conscious suffering. I have ventured to place before India—the ancient law of self-sacrifice—the law of suffering." R.R. 47.48.

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Q.—Is the notion of 'vicarious suffering' found in the teaching of our Lord?

How can we take over the suffering of our people even if we desire to do so?

V

The limits and limitations of the doctrine

After nearly two thousand years after Christ, applied Christianity is still an unknown and untried science. The devotional, philosophic and credal aspects of Christianity have been fairly well worked out. The Christianity that exists, is individual Christianity—made up of personal devotion to Christ. Of the Kingdom of God *i.e.*, of the application of Christian principles to the construction of a new social, economic and political order we know next to nothing. Neither have we the help of history or the guidance of Christian experience to go by. The social, economic and political life of the West is built on principles inherited from Rome and Greece, supplemented by the indigenous genius of the Western nations. They are not Christian. People have followed Christ and His ethics individually, but not communally or nationally. Christians live all over the world in systems built on foundations essentially non-christian, if not un-christian. Apart from limited experiments made now and then, the Indian National Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi is the first large scale experiment to achieve liberty by spiritual methods. We are applying it against unknown forces, in the face of determined opposition, and without any past experience to guide us. Hence the limitations of the experiment. We may mention some of these necessary limitations.

1. We do not understand the full implications of the doctrine of non-violence. We have got hold of the fringe of a great and mighty new force whose laws and workings we do not fully understand. Our ignorance necessarily imposes serious limitations. We do not know yet how to exploit the new forces or how to employ it for our benefit.

2. The national movement inspired by the idea of non-

violence is an experiment—we have no assurance of success. We believe firmly that in a world governed by moral forces it must succeed. But our faith is being tested at every turn. Every error weakens our faith; want of success sows seeds of doubt as to the efficiency of the non-violence. This hesitant mood, this weak faith not yet confirmed by success interposes another limitation.

3. The urgency of the political situation admits of no delay. We have no trained workers at our disposal. We have to train the combatants in the midst of the combat. The situation is akin to what happened during the great war. The danger at the front was so great, the issue so critical that every citizen young or old, good or bad, fit or unfit had to be thrown into the front. There was no time for adequate preparation; or for necessary training. The same is the case with the movement of non-violence. Even as it is it was the moral discipline of Guzarat—of the country round about the Sabarmati Ashram—that made the experiment feasible at all.

4. The movement has to be carried amidst all round opposition bent on imperilling its success at any cost. Naturally those who represent the other side of the conflict are dead set against it. Within there are schools of thought and action which believe in violence. Some of the older generation have faith in parliamentary action and in negotiation. The movement has not been pressed with all the moral resources of the Indian people. The movement is on probation. Hence also its limitations.

5. Non-violence demands a higher discipline than violence—a great power of endurance, greater stamina. The rank and file are yet unequal for such strain, The imperfect material, imperfectly disciplined, ever prone to lapse into violence, ever ready to hear other counsellors and try other measures, necessarily circumscribes the range and success of the experiment.

6. We have already said that the Sermon on the Mount could not be applied in toto in politics. It is the negative

principle of non-violence and not the positive principle of love that is being tried. The masses are not yet prepared to try the principle of love. A negative faith lacks the affirmative strength. We are still in the region of non-co-operation, boycott—i.e. we are realising the power of the negative and not the strength of the positive. Moreover the variety of religions in India and the sensitiveness of the religious mind renders it desirable not to bring religion into the experiment. In its public propaganda, the movement has to rely on patriotism, heroism, strength of will and normal capacity to endure. Religious power though available could not be availed of. The movement has to be worked with limited resources. The force behind the movement is spiritual but not religious. The spiritual in the level of action is less potent than the religious. Thus a negative doctrine worked with limited resources, amidst constant opposition, by persons with divided loyalties—naturally imposes serious handicap on the working out of the doctrine of non-violence.

> "The law of complete love is the law of my being. But I am not preaching this final law through measures I advocate. I know such an attempt is foredoomed to failure. To expect the whole mass of men and women to obey that law all at once is not to know its worth. I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist." R.R. p. 46.

II. Limits of the doctrine

Love, according to the founder of Christianity, is a universal principle applicable to the major and minor issues of life, to peace and war alike. Non-violence has no such universal application. It is a principle of warfare, necessarily presuming a conflict or war for its application. It is ethics of the crisis. There are therefore limits within which alone it can operate. Any illegitimate use of the doctrine may cause more harm than good.

(*a*) A conflict should exist before non-violence could be applied. But as it has been already pointed out,

life is not all conflict. There are areas where life flows placidly and depends on harmony and combination. There is no need to apply non-violence where there is no violence to be resisted. Non-co-operation and boycott are not permanent supports of life. Life rests on co-operation and conflict on non-cooperation.

(*b*) Not only should there be a conflict, the conflict should involve a crisis. A crisis is a supreme struggle—in which the ultimate issues of social and political life are involved. Not every conflict is a crisis, not every need an emergency. Non-cooperation is an emergency measure, to be used in a critical juncture in national affairs.

In our national affairs there are points or hinges on which life turns. These are the relations of the ruler and the ruled; of men and women, of capital and labour, of village and town. It is in conflicts relating to these issues that non-violence has to be employed.

There has been a tendency to employ the doctrine for every difference of opinion. There has been a desire to non-cooperate with non-cooperation. All this uninstructed talk rests on a failure to apprehend the fact that we do not live by non-cooperation but only fight with it in a grave emergency.

As in the case of the use of arbitrary powers in democratic countries—such as the suspension of ordinary laws and the promulgation of ordinances—an emergency must first be declared upon. So also before non-cooperation is brought into effect the national leaders must on deep reflection declare that a crisis has arisen. Then only should we resort to satyagraha. For example the withdrawal of students from schools and colleges has been found to be not a proper exercise of satyagraha. This limit of the dictrine has carefully to be kept in mind.

VI

What should be our attitude towards Satyagraha?

At everyturn the christian in India is presented with problems demanding immediate solution, and meets with questions requiring a definite answer. These are not academical issues, but intensely practical ones calling for urgent action. On what principle should he act? Take some of the problems.

1. Should he join the movement for liberty in India?
2. Which of the rival parties having liberty as their aim should engage his loyalty?
3. Should be obey laws which he feels to be unjust and wicked?
4. Should he join social reform parties and self respect movements?
5. What should be his attitude towards humanitarian movements distinctly anti-religious?
6. Should he take interest in the reform of Hindu temples?
7. What judgement is he to form on tenancy legislation with confiscatory tendencies towards landlords?
8. Should he sympathise with industrial strikes or with strike-breakers?

Every one of these problems involves a live issue. So long as the christian is in society he must react to them intelligently or blindly, on principle or without-what he requires is a general principle for guidance. Biblical texts are of little use. The teachings of our Lord, may or may not be helpful in circumstances totally different from those in which they are delivered. We require a test comprehensive enough to be helpful in all emergencies of the situation and definite enough to be of practical use. It is suggested that the true test is the spirit of Christ.

which alone can make us react instinctively and correctly. Before our loyalty to a cause is won two tests have to be satisfied :—

1. Does the movement clash with our loyalty to Christ ?
2. Does the movement militate against 'the grand object of all christian effort i.e. the Kingdom of God ? Does it promote the Kingdom of God ?

It is not suggested that the answer is easy in a given situation but sincerity and prayer may always make it possible to submit a situation to these tests ?

None of the situations that arise in social and political life are definitely christian i.e. such that the application of the christian principle is clear. Between alternatives definitely christian on one side and unchristian on the other the choice is fairly easy. But between alternatives both of which are more or less Christian or nonchristian, the choice is not quite so easy. Before we apply these tests to the satyagraha let us look at certain features that may help in determining our attitude.

II

1. Satyagraha applies religion to politics. The tragedy of all religious life is the division of life into departments in some of which only religion comes into play i.e.,into sacred and secular. If religion is a principle of life, it must be not only applicable but applied to all departments of life. We apply Christianity to domestic circles but rarely to public questions. Any attempt to illustrate the applicability of religion to politics or industry deserves our approval. Mahatma Gandhi has made it clear that his movement is religious.

> " If I seem to take part in politics it is only because politics today encircles us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with the snake. I am trying to introduce religion into politics" R.R.
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> " Most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise. I however who wear the guise of a politician am at heart a religious man R. R.

"Soul force is a purely religious movement and its use is only possible to those who are religiously inclined "

2. Satyagraha is definitely christian.

I have already shown that the movement is inspired by the spirit of the Sermon of the Mount. True, it does not apply it in full measure. At any rate, it applies the teachings of our Lord at least to a certain extent to the solution of a most intractable political issue. In certain quarters the objection to the movement was that it is christian.

3. Satyagraha—proclaims a pacifist outlook on life.

Wars, class wars, competitions are tormenting humanity, arresting its Godward march. Any movement which stresses pacific outlook on life which does not promote strife and hatred, needs to be helped for the healing of the nations.

4. Of the alternatives possible, satyagraha is the most christian implement available. We have only three solutions put forward, for attaining liberty.

1. use of force—bomb cult and revolution—the principle of retaliation.
2. use of non-violence—soul force– The principle of Satyagraha.
3. use of legislative action—use of the instrument of negotiation.

With regard to the third alternative the party which advocated it-the liberal party-is practically extinct. Moreover parlimentary action however useful cannot operate beyond its own limits. No legislative action can transfer power from the British Parliament to the Indian people. *Ex-hypothesi* it is beyond their province as limited legislatures. The principle of the Round Table Conference is not eschewed by the leaders of the satyagraha movement.

The real alternative is between retaliation and non-violence—between Russian influence through Tolstoi and Russian influence through Trotsky.

5. Satyagraha implies direct action—change of—radica change of the social and political order in the direction of the equality of wealth and opportunity—of the happiness of the poor. It attempts to realise a vision and thus becomes amenable to the positive test.

III

In the light of these considerations let us put the ideal and the method of satyagraha to the decisive tests.

The effort for liberty, for unimpeded expression of national life, for the freedom of life from alien control—does it clash with loyalty to Christ?

If Western history—or universal aspirations are a guide at all, the answer is clear. If the spirit of Christ is against slavery—individual bondage—how can it be for national bondage. It is not possible to hold to a Christianity consistent with slavery. The movement for liberty cannot clash with loyalty to Christ. As to the methods employed they are as shown above nearer the christian methods than the alternatives available. Does it promote the Kingdom of God? All that we can say at this stage is that it does not impede progress towards it. If freedom is the atmosphere favourable to efforts to create the Kingdom of God, the movement helps the attainment of the necessary conditions.

IV

An objection is taken that the leaders of the movement do not accept Christ. It is true that while accepting the Sermon on the Mount as a practical guide, Mahatma Gandhi does not accept Christ as his exclusive Saviour. The movement is not led by christians in the accepted sense of the term. The question however is not the attitude of the leaders of the movement to Christ but the attitude of Christians to the movement. The problem is what attitude should be adopted by christians in situations which present alternatives that are not entirely christian. There is hardly a situation in life which is